

PUBLIC WORKS—IRELAND.

REPORTS

OF THE

BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS

IN

I R E L A N D,

RELATIVE TO

MEASURES ADOPTED FOR THE RELIEF OF DISTRESS, IN
MARCH, APRIL, AND MAY.

1847.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

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1847.

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BOARD OF WORKS.

COMMISSIONERS of PUBLIC WORKS to the LORDS of the TREASURY.

Office of Public Works, April 6, 1847.

We have at length to record a diminution in the numbers of the labour roll, and in the corresponding expenditure, which are shown in the annexed table.

	NUMBER.			COST.			
	Roads, &c.	Drainage.	Total.	Labour.	Superintendence Charged to Burdets.	Superintendence Charged to Government.	Total.
For week ending—				£.	£.	£.	£.
March 6th .	714,390	20,472	734,792	235,484	17,001	5,224	257,709
.. 13th .	708,902	20,735	729,637	235,922	17,102	5,081	258,105
.. 20th .	684,442	20,490	704,932	228,940	17,103	5,351	251,394
.. 27th .	558,947	20,976	579,923	183,383	16,367	5,075	204,825

At the opening of our labours in September we stated the principles on which, from the best judgment we could obtain, from independent documents and local knowledge and inquiry, we had formed our estimate of the probable number who would require relief for the whole country, and they concurred remarkably.

The number of families dwelling in fourth class houses, with the addition of two-thirds of those dwelling in third-class houses, amounted to 894,885.

From the same source (Census of 1841), it appears that the number supported by their own manual labour amounted to 936,500. The number engaged in agricultural pursuits amounted to 974,183. These numbers comprised the civic as well as the rural population, and the latter contained the higher classes, but they left little doubt that about 900,000 was the ultimate number to be expected in the months of May and June, if the labour system had continued.

In the first week of the present month the number had attained its maximum, and was rapidly approaching the expected number. Aware of its tendency to increase from pressure, panic, and other causes, we never ceased to exercise the most vigilant supervision, and our reports have shown from time to time that while, on the one hand, the most strenuous exertions were made to provide and lay out works in the most distressed districts, the utmost care was taken to place the most distressed objects on them, in the first instance, because we felt that the greater the number became, the higher we rose in the scale of independence, and the more difficult it would be to make any change in the system, or to revert to a more wholesome state of society at a future day. We have already estimated the amount of this check, at a constant value of about one-third, the numbers employed being about two-thirds of the numbers on the lists of the Relief Committees.

The change of system announced at the meeting of Parliament, which had been made known to us before, rendered double caution necessary on our part, that the new measures might not be overpowered at their opening, and even before the Act 10th Vic. cap. 7 had received the Royal Assent, we issued our Circular, No. 66, of the 22nd February, pointing out that relief by labour must very shortly cease, and urging the great importance to all parties of renewed exertions, to make the change as gradual as possible, by absorbing into the labour of the country the numbers who must otherwise be supported by gratuitous food.

This was strengthened by the letter of the Lord Lieutenant to Relief Committees, dated 5th of March, and we had begun to receive satisfactory reports, from the best districts, of the effects of this new and vigorous revision of the labour lists, aided and carried out by the good feeling and exertions of numerous influential persons, by which indeed the increase was checked, and even a small reduction had begun. Concurrently, however, with this, we still exercised the power deputed to us by the Lord Lieutenant's letter of the 29th January, made known by our Circular of 2nd February, No. 59, of continuing employment on those works, where the funds had become exhausted, but where measures had been taken to convene sessions for the purpose of presenting sums to cover the expense thus incurred, by which, it was hoped, all sudden stoppage would be avoided, and the suspension of a work would be a measure dreaded as a punishment.

This power was withdrawn on the 8th instant, but has been subsequently restored at our instance, and Presentment Sessions are again convened, and the suspended works are again opened in the districts where they are indispensably necessary.

We have next to advert to your Lordships' Minute of the 11th March, directing a reduction of 20 per cent. from the numbers employed on the 20th instant, which it will be seen by the figures at the opening of this report, has been duly carried out on the average numbers of the whole country.

We gave immediate notice of this by our Circular, No. 72, and we have spared no effort to make this reduction with as little suffering as possible.

We annex the series of reports which we have called for on the subject.

So extensive and general a measure, coming at a moment when a gradual diminution had already begun, and when, from the cause above stated, many works were falling out, has pressed unequally in spite of every effort to the contrary, and we are endeavouring to redress the partial evils, as rapidly as they come to our knowledge. On the whole, however, it cannot be doubted that it has thrown labour into agriculture, where it was so much wanted at this important season, and has given, in the districts where relief was abused by the Committees, an opportunity of placing on the works many objects of greater destitution than were on them before.

It has been our practice, from the very commencement of our labours, to recommend for your Lordship's sanction only small portions of the sums presented for at sessions, at successive intervals, so that we have never had more, on an average, than three weeks or a month's labour on hand, and such is still our custom. It is now our wish to guide ourselves entirely by the measures and progress of the new Commission. As we receive intimation that their operations are sufficiently advanced in any Union to afford relief, we shall stop, with their concurrence, the present works, and if, by these means, a moderate pause can be obtained, we hope to bring the most important of the works to a satisfactory termination (should adequate funds be provided) in the months of June and July, by the free and effective labour of as many labourers only as are required, at ordinary and fair prices, and by a vigorous enforcement of task-work, which, for the present, we have suspended, except in a few districts, where from peculiar circumstances it has been real and successful.

We regard the temporary suspension of the works as extremely important, and we look to their partial resumption with much anxiety, because, under any circumstances, they will, in all probability, be very extensive, and will require very careful supervision. They will afford, indeed, the proper test of the utility of the Labour Rate Act, because they will then become, as that Act was intended to be, an auxiliary to the more regular measures for relief, instead of its sole dependence. The new measures will be aided by a large amount of public labour. Our operations have had no assistance. The whole country was thrown upon them without further restraint than such as we could ourselves impose.

The Drainage Presentment Works, under Mr. Labouchere's letter, continue to proceed in a very satisfactory manner, and the labourers employed have, in every locality, become much more expert in the performance of their tasks, and their earnings are equal to their wants.

In several districts the labourers employed had never seen a deep drain, which was at the same time narrow at top and bottom, and they conceived it to be impossible to sink a drain 3 feet in depth, which should not exceed 1 foot

2 inches in breadth at top, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches at bottom. Hence they objected to undertake the cutting of such drains by task at a moderate price. But after a little experience, the men in every district became not only reconciled to the work but took pleasure in it, vying with each other in the accuracy and perfection of the execution. We beg to refer to the several reports of our Inspectors of Drainage contained in the Appendix, for important and satisfactory details on this subject, details which prove how soon our people become reconciled to novel kinds of work when they are well and steadily directed, and when they find that with reasonable exertion they can earn fair wages. The similarity of the results in this respect, as recorded by the several Inspectors of Drainage throughout the country, is remarkable, and it should be observed, we have had to instruct not only ordinary farm labourers, but *fishermen*, unaccustomed to spade labour, and the inhabitants of towns, who are proverbial for idleness and hatred to exertion.

The Presentment Drainage Works are now in operation in every district, and the numbers at present employed amount to 20,976, who are distributed as follows:—

Leinster	5,622
Munster	5,794
Ulster	7,366
Connaught	2,194
Total	20,976

We had calculated on a greater number at the present time, but a considerable portion of those who had been employed during the last month have left the drains of their own accord, and are now usefully employed in farm works, but the defalcation has been made up by drafts from the Road Works, the labourers on which do not now, as heretofore, object to employment on the Drainage Works, finding that those who work steadily are well paid.

Though the number employed may appear to be small when compared with the gross total of labourers on the Road Works, still 20,000 men and upwards have been instructed in Drainage Works, which, together with the numerous Sub-Inspectors and Overseers, will form a most valuable corps of trained labourers and overseers, fully capable of carrying out the more comprehensive system of drainage operations which will be undertaken by the landed proprietors, when the Land Improvement Bill, at present under discussion in Parliament, shall have become an Act of the Legislature. We feel no hesitation in expressing our decided opinion that great advantage will result from this measure, and, from the numerous applications which have been already made in anticipation for loans under it, we have no doubt that very extended employment will be afforded through its operation to the labourers of Ireland, during the present and probably the two following years.

Shannon Navigation.

The operations at the several shoals have been resumed, and the contractors are making every preparation for pushing forward the works with vigour during the coming season. The water has been pumped out of the Athlone Lock Pit, and the setting of masonry has been recommenced.

The number of persons employed daily on the Shannon Works during the month of March was 564, giving a total for the month of 14,669.

Piers and Harbours.

The works at Annalong, Arran Island, Carlingford, Dunany, Rush, Slade, Rathmullen, and Ballyvaughan, are proceeding satisfactorily; and contracts have been advertised for building a wharf at Grey Stones, County of Wicklow, and for the proposed harbour at New Castle, County Down; also for building a landing slip at Bunowen, County Galway, and a tender has been accepted for constructing a pier at Moville, County Donegal. Provisional declarations, as required by the Act, have been issued in the cases of Portnablahy, Kilkieran, and Port Oriel, and the final notice issue for Rosroe where the work will be commenced immediately.

The number of persons employed on the above-mentioned piers and harbours daily during the month of March was 1092, making a total of 29,484.

Drainage.

(5 and 6 Vic. c. 89; 8 and 9 Vic. c. 69; 9 Vic. c. 4.)

Applications received for drainage up to 31st March, 1847	554
Applications received for drainage up to 28th February, 1847	500

Number of applications for March	54
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Of 54 applications received during the past month, 29 are for thorough drainage of the lands of individual proprietors to an extent of about 81,000 acres; and 23 for the drainage of rivers.

Abstract of Works and Expenditure for the last Three Months.

1847		Average Men, per Day.
January, 68 districts; expenditure, £18,000		5,540
February, 77 " "	14,869	4,252
March, 97 " "	15,615	5,839

The works have been actively resumed in such districts as permitted them but the state of the weather is yet unfavourable for generally employing such numbers as we hope to put on in the course of the summer.

A slight increase in the expenditure and number of men appears in the foregoing abstract for the last quarter, and there can be no doubt of the increase of employment that will, upon the opening of the weather, be given for the remainder of the season.

Fisheries.—Curing Stations.

Our anticipations as to the success likely to attend the operations of the fish-curing stations, established, with your Lordships' sanction, on the western coast of Ireland, have been to some extent realized. Though the period since their formation is too short to allow of any considerable exhibition of results, yet, from what has been already done, we are of opinion that the most beneficial results may be expected.

At Killybegs in the county of Donegal, and Belmullet in Mayo, the beneficial stimulus which it was intended that those establishments should communicate to the fisheries, has been most evident, and the fishermen *now certain* of a market, have applied themselves with considerable activity to their proper occupation.

Previously to this, the fisheries had been to a great extent abandoned, and the fishermen had obtained employment in great numbers on roads, for which they were unsuited, but a better feeling has now been induced, and in the neighbourhood of the station, they have returned and resumed their former, and more legitimate occupation.

In the neighbourhood of Roundstone, however, there appeared to be a disposition on the part of the fishermen to retain the pay they enjoyed on the roads, instead of returning to their more laborious business of the fisheries; this, we thought it right to discourage, and having obtained a list of such boat-owners as had boats fit to go to sea, we directed that none so provided should receive employment on the Public Works.

We have reason to think that the desired effect has been produced, the late Reports containing very favourable accounts of the progress being made at Roundstone station.

The station at Baltimore is now in operation, and Mr. Barry, one of the Board's Inspectors of Fisheries, has proceeded to the south, to make inquiries and arrangements preliminary to the establishment of those more recently sanctioned at Castletown and Valencia.

We have made arrangements for supplying fish from Killybegs to the Relief Committee at Sligo, at such a price, as (securing still the necessary profit to cover expenses, &c.), will enable that body to dispense to the surrounding poor, soup made therefrom, which is understood to be an exceedingly cheap, and nutritious description of food.

In conclusion, we beg to state, that we have seen with much pleasure in some instances, that prices higher than those we have authorised our agents to give, have been obtained by the fishermen from the regular fish-buyers, in consequence of which our establishments have been occasionally deserted. This is a healthy symptom of returning trade, and gives promise of the creation of a regular market in the increase of the public demand, upon which all permanently prosperous trade must ultimately depend.

COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS to the LORDS of the TREASURY.

Office of Public Works,
May, 1847.

THE month of April has been one of much anxiety, from the reductions which have taken place every week, either by the falling out of works from the want of funds, or on completion, or by the reductions which have been ordered with a view to the operations of the New Relief. The numbers and expense have been as follows:—

	Number.			Cost.			
	Reels, &c.	Drainage.	Total.	Labour.	Superintendence charged to Board.	Superintendence charged to Government.	Total.
				£.	£.	£.	£.
Week ending 3rd April .	505,720	19,798	525,518	168,005	13,560	5,075	176,581
.. 10th April .	479,837	20,885	500,723	134,790	13,133	5,070	152,993
.. 17th April .	451,152	21,636	472,788	125,285	13,133	5,070	143,488
.. 1st May .	397,929	21,117	419,046	124,095	13,135	5,070	142,299

It will be seen, by these figures, that the reduction produced by the former causes, that is, the completion or falling out of works, was from 20,000 to 30,000 men each week, being the same rate at which the weekly augmentation had taken place in former months. This was the natural and anticipated result of the cautious manner in which we had provided works and funds by small instalments and modifications, as stated in our former reports, and if the only object had been to transfer a certain number (740,000 labourers) from one mode of relief to another, and if it could have been distributed equally, it would probably have been sufficient. But with the opening season, new sources of labour were opening also, and the works fell out most rapidly, where, from the greater pressure of distress, the greatest numbers had been forced upon them.

The reduction of 20 per cent. by your Lordships' orders, on the 20th March, had confessedly thrown labour most beneficially into agriculture, at a critical period of the season, and by new Presentment Sessions we were enabled to absorb the labourers where the want of labour continued after works had fallen out, so far as to prevent extreme suffering in those districts; and it cannot be doubted that these two measures, viz, reduction and sessions, had, together, operated advantageously. During the month of April the new relief was gradually coming into operation, and as all the Committees and Inspectors had been some time appointed, it was thought that a farther reduction might be effected. Accordingly on the 10th and 12th April circulars were issued by us, and by the Relief Commissioners, announcing a reduction of 10 per cent. on the 24th of that month, and the general stoppage of relief, by works, on the 1st instant.

The Relief Commissioners will report the progress of the new measures; we are officially cognizant of them only when announced to us as being in operation. But as the time for reduction approached, it was found that in many districts they were very backward, and in some there was no doubt that the want of influential proprietors and resident gentry to constitute working Committees, as well as other causes, created difficulties in their way which were not fairly to be attributed to neglect or want of exertion on the part of the Committees themselves. In these districts, accordingly, it was agreed that the reductions should be modified. We annex to this Report a schedule, showing the modifications so ordered, and a map exhibiting the parts of the country in which the works still continue, with the proportionate reductions effected in each on the 1st of May; also a map exhibiting the parts of the country in which the new measures are in operation. We cannot venture to hope that these changes have been wholly effected without suffering. We have endeavoured to make them with as much caution and prudence as possible, having in view the object

No. 54 and No. 10.

to be attained, viz., that relief was to be henceforth sought from the Relief Commissioners, not from us; and, only after every consideration which could be given to them, from local knowledge and examination of the country, as well as the peculiar circumstances and condition of the different districts, shown by the numerous reports we daily received.

We have endeavoured to urge forward the more legitimate Public Works entrusted to us, as drainage, piers, harbours, docks, and buildings; one or other of which, and not unfrequently several, are opening in almost every part of the country, requiring labour which is now absorbed by the indiscriminate employment of the Relief Works.

The Bill for improvement of land will shortly become law, and we have encouraged applications for loans under it, and procured reports upon them in anticipation of its progress, that no time may be lost in beginning to work at the earliest moment. We, therefore, hope no serious apprehension need be entertained of want of sufficient employment for the greater portion, if not the whole, of the able-bodied and industrious poor for a considerable time to come, with a great and permanent advantage to the country from their labour. Such labour, however, must not be counted on as continuous; it can only be a prelude to a more natural state of things, involving questions on which this is not the time or place to enter.

We cannot count on the numbers being less than 200,000 during the summer months of June, July, and August. This number of able-bodied labourers will complete the existing works, both of roads and drainage, under the Relief Acts and Mr. Labouchere's letter; and as these months pass away it is to be hoped the Improvement Bill, the arterial drainages, and the various Public Works now coming into operation, will gradually absorb nearly the same amount of labour; and before that time arrives, we shall know the state of the crops and the prospects of the country for another year. The point which most immediately presents itself, in connexion with this subject, is the completion of the road works which have been suspended or which are still in operation.

In those districts where, from their peculiar circumstances, it may not after further reductions be possible wholly to close the works, even for a short time, we are endeavouring to remove the infirm, or weak and useless people, as rapidly as support can be found for them, either from the new measures or from charitable funds; and in other districts we purpose to resume, in the first instance, the most useful works, such as the leading communications of the country and the mail-coach roads.

During the last and several previous months we have been actively engaged in the valuation of lands taken, and compensation for damages done by execution of works during the season, in order to be prepared for the summer assizes in July, when the grand juries will be called on to authorize payment to parties claiming on our certificates. This is a very complicated question. There cannot be less than 100,000 certificates, every one of which requires the special examination and award of a competent valuator, of every interest involved in it. We annex to this Report, as an example, one of the forms which have been adopted for that purpose. Every plot of ground cut through or taken must be surveyed, its contents measured, and the interest of every claimant upon it, however small or remote, separately examined.

It will be for the grand juries to decide whether all these claims shall be paid. In many districts the proprietors, and even the occupiers, of property are so largely benefited on the whole, by the construction of a new road, or the improvement of an old one, that they may well afford to forego compensation for partial or local damage to a particular farm or field, but it is not the less necessary for us to value the actual damage or loss in every instance.

The number of valuers whom it has been necessary to appoint to effect this operation, in the short time allowed, has been considerable, but the total expense will be small, compared to the amount of the valuations, which will not fall short of a million and a half pounds in money value, while we calculate the probable expense of the operation at little more than 12,000*l*.

Since the above Report was written, the returns for the week ending 8th May have been received, and they exhibit the numbers and cost during that week as follows:—

Number.			Cost.			
Roads.	Drainage.	Total.	Labour.	Superintendence charged to Revenue.	Superintendence charged to Government.	Total.
226,766	21,271	248,037	£. 83,645	£. 12,647	£. 4,776	£. 101,068

Fisheries.

The weather for the month of April has been such as to limit the days upon which the fishermen could go out to very few; however, the increase of capture has been very considerable as compared with the preceding month; and the amount of fish purchased by the Board's agents at Belmullet and Killybegs has been greater than for the month preceding, as the annexed accounts will show. The capture of fish in the locality of Roundstone is progressively upon the increase; but the local demand has been more than sufficient for the supply, which kept prices high, and the fishermen have been well remunerated.

The weather has been unusually unsettled for the season of the year; and, judging by the quantity of fish taken under such circumstances, there can be no doubt of a large increase when it settles.

Quarterly Account complete to the 27th March, 1847. (M.)
Abstract of Transactions for the five weeks ending 1st May, 1847. (N.)

Drainage.

Memorials received to 30th April, 1847 .	596
Ditto 31st March .	554
Total for month of April .	42

Of these 13 are for thorough drainage and improvement of the lands of individual proprietors.

The falling off in the number of memorials for measures of this class is owing to parties awaiting the passing of the Landed Property Improvement Act, now before Parliament.

Abstract of Works and Expenditure for the last Four Months.

January, 68 districts .	Expenditure £18,000 0 0	- men per day 5,540
February, 77 "	" 14,869 0 0	" 4,952
March, 97 "	" 15,615 0 0	" 5,839
April 112 "	" 22,650 13 1	" 8,623

Shannon Navigation.

Since our last Report, the progress of the works along the Shannon has advanced with the opening season, and the number of men employed has increased considerably; the number for the first week being 850, and for the last week in the month 1527; giving a total daily for the month, of 1191.

At Athlone the building of the lock has been brought nearly to completion; and at Clerhann Shoal, in the same district, active operations have been commenced, nearly 400 men being employed working night and day by double shifts; not, however, without a very expensive outfit for unwatering, there being five steam-engines now employed working the pumps. The deepening of the large shoal at Cloonfad has been brought to a successful close during the month; and preparations have been made for commencing operations at Bird's Island. We have also made such arrangements as we expect will ensure the completion of the extensive works in the Jamestown and Boyle water districts, at the close of the present season; and the number of men on these works is daily increasing. The Lough Allen Canal has been unwatered, with a view to commencing the contemplated improvements; and early arrangements will be made for commencing the excavation of some minor shoals which still remain to be deepened.

The three steam-dredgers are still at work clearing away such of the shoals in the Athlone district as admit of being dredged; and in another month we expect to have to report the completion of the large shoal at Garrymore.

Piers and Harbours.

During the past month tenders were accepted for building the wharf at Greystones, county Wicklow, and the quay and excavation at Newport, county of Mayo, and those works are now in active operation.

The tenders received for the undermentioned places not being satisfactory, viz.,—

Bunowen . . .	County Galway
Mountcharles . . .	Donegal
Portnablahy . . .	„
Ballyness . . .	„
Ballycotton . . .	Cork
Newcastle . . .	Down

We have resolved upon executing these works by day's work; and they are all now in operation, excepting Newcastle, the arrangements for which are not yet complete.

Meetings have been held, and assents to the proposed assessments obtained in the following cases, viz., Kilmakeelogue, Valentia, Dingle, Ventry, and Bandon, county of Kerry; Kilkeeran, county of Galway.

A meeting has also been held, and assents obtained, for the proposed assessment for Belmullet, county of Mayo, and the works will be commenced as soon as practicable.

The average number of persons employed daily during the month of April was 436, making a total for that period of 12,348.

COMMISSIONERS OF PUBLIC WORKS to the LORDS of the TREASURY.

Office of Public Works, June 9, 1847.

It is now our duty to report the progress of relief during the past month. The numbers and expenditure have been as under:—

PERIODS.	NUMBER.		COST.			Total.
	Roads.	Buildings.	Labour.	Superintendence charged to Barons.	Superintendence charged to Government.	
Week ending—	Labourers.	Labourers.	£.	£.	£.	£.
1st May . . .	397,929	21,117	124,096	13,133	5,070	142,299
3rd May . . .	226,766	21,271	88,645	12,647	4,776	101,068
13th May . . .	192,072	21,378	67,668	9,380	4,776	81,652
23rd May . . .	142,341	21,390	60,460	8,669	4,790	63,849
29th May . . .	111,696	22,689	34,831	6,266	4,750	45,811

In the months of April and May our leading object has been to reduce the number of labourers employed for relief, under the Labour Rate Act, 9th and 10th Vic., cap. 107, by watching carefully the progress of the new relief measures in each Union, under the 10th Vic., cap. 7; and on our being advised by the Commissioners that the arrangements for the distribution of food had been completed, and were in operation, we diminished the numbers, or altogether discontinued the works, as appeared to be most desirable.

It will be seen by the foregoing table that in the week ending the 1st of May the numbers employed on the relief roads were 397,929, while, on the 29th of May, they were reduced to 111,696; but if we compare the numbers employed on the 3rd of April, viz., 505,720, with those on the 29th of May, we find a gross reduction of 494,024, and we are happy to state that this great reduction has been effected without any material suffering on the part of the destitute poor.

We have now reached a point beyond which it will be difficult, as well as injudicious, to carry out further reductions, particularly in localities where the new relief measures have not come into full operation, which is the case in some of the most remote and destitute of our western districts. We would allude to the mountainous region situate to the west of Lough Corrib, in the county of Galway, and also the western baronies of the counties of Cork, Mayo,

and Donegal, but we still hope that throughout the greater portion of those districts we shall be enabled to diminish, if not discontinue, relief labour during the present month.

Having reduced the number of our labourers, our next object has been to make a proportionate reduction in our staff, both in the engineering and financial departments, and this has been effected to a considerable extent in both, as will appear from the following table, showing the present and previous numbers of persons employed under our direction in these departments:—

	30th April, 1847.	31st May, 1847.	5th June, 1847.	Remarks.
Inspecting officers . .	10	9	5	Will be further reduced during the present month.
Engineers	74	70	57	
Assistant engineers . .	558	448	175	Number ordered by Circular No. 95 for future employment.
Overseers	9617	3514	518	Ditto ditto.
Check clerks	4065	1932	1789	Will be altogether reduced during the present month.
Office clerks (country)	429	371	346	Not yet arranged, but there will be a considerable reduction.
Ditto (head quarters) .	174	174	174	
Draftsmen	10	13	13	
Valuers	1	1	1	
Assistant valuers . .	81	87	87	
Inspectors of drainage .	50	49	49	
Sub-inspectors . . .	131	123	133	
Inspectors of accounts .	37	37	37	Will be reduced to 15.
Pay clerks	531	382	326	Will be still further reduced.

Hitherto our staff of engineers and assistant-engineers has been quite inadequate to the due execution of the work to be performed, owing to the vast number of destitute labourers that were necessarily employed over and above what would have been required had the works been undertaken solely on account of their usefulness, and not, as was generally the case, to give relief employment.

This circumstance led, in many cases, to a comparatively useless expenditure, and when upwards of 700,000 men were employed it was found to be quite impossible to provide either assistant-engineers or overseers capable of carrying out the intentions of the principal engineer of the district. In consequence, many of the smaller works have been injudiciously executed; but, in regard to the larger ones, we are happy to say they have been generally laid out with judgment, and executed with skill.

At the present time, according to your Lordships' instructions, the attention of our engineers has been directed first to the completion of the presentment works on the leading lines of communication throughout the country, and next to the most important of the new roads connecting principal towns; and the whole of the works are to be executed by measurement, or small contracts, by able-bodied labourers (Circular No. 93).

The systematic and economical execution of works, according to this system, will require the continuance of a suitable staff of engineers and overseers, the whole of which should be capable of directing the labourers, measuring the works, and calculating the amounts earned, according to the schedule of prices determined on by the principal engineers and approved by us; and although the number thus required will be considerable in the aggregate, we do not mean to retain a single individual whose services can be dispensed with, or who shall not be found fully qualified for the duties required of him.

In regard to the financial department, a strict scrutiny has been made, in consequence of which we propose to discontinue 21 out of 37 inspectors of pay clerks, leaving only 16, who will probably be required for the next two months; and, in regard to pay clerks, they will be located in each district, in proportion to the amount of payments to be made for works, of every description, which may be executed under this Board, and which, in addition to road works, will comprehend the river or arterial drainages, thorough draining, under Mr. Labouchere's letter, navigation piers, &c., and we anticipate, when the whole system is complete, that the payments will be regular, and the expenditure moderate.

The thorough draining works, under Mr. Labouchere's letter, are still in full operation, and the system adopted in their execution has given that general satisfaction that we have no doubt their success will tend materially to the introduction of a comparatively perfect system of drainage throughout the country. In many districts these drainage presentment works are now drawing to a close, and will make way for the extensive works of land improvement which will probably be commenced immediately under the new Land Improvement Act.

It is the intention of the Board to discontinue the works of every description commenced under the Labour Rate Act, 9th and 10th Vic., cap. 107, on or before the 15th of August next; and a circular to that effect (Circular No. 94) has been issued to all persons in charge of districts. We expect that the greater number of these works will have ceased, either from their being completed or from a want of funds, previously to the above period, so that the general discontinuance will not occasion any serious inconvenience, and, besides, the harvest labour will have commenced by the middle of August, and ample employment will thus be afforded to all those who may require it.

We have still employed three officers of the Royal Engineers in making inspections throughout the several counties in Ireland of the works left unfinished; they have been directed to make them in conjunction with the principal engineers in charge, so that a joint report will be furnished, thereby affording to us the best information to guide us in determining the important lines of road on which the works are to be continued.

The detail of business still continues to press heavily in the accountant's department, which renders it impossible to make any reductions in the number of clerks employed, the labour of examining the vast number of distinct accounts which daily pour in is excessive, and considerable time must elapse before they can properly be arranged, and all the necessary vouchers obtained to support them.

From the reports we have received there is every reason to believe that the loss in tools will be very inconsiderable, which is rather surprising, considering the number and variety of implements which have been scattered through the country among a number of labouring parties, working under very indifferent superintendence.

We have experienced great difficulty in the settlement of tradesmen's bills in the country; many individuals have claimed for tools which were not ordered; others made tools of bad materials, which were very properly rejected by the officers; and some made tools upon speculation, in the expectation that they would be taken off their hands, and now complain that they are refused. Such claims cause much trouble, and, even when admitted, it is difficult to procure accurate bills; hence delays occur in the payments.

RIVER DRAINAGE.

(Acts 5 and 6 Vic., c. 89; 8 and 9 Vic., c. 69; and 9 Vic., c. 4.)

Preliminaries.

Memorials received up to 31st May	629
Ditto ditto 30th April	596
Total for month of May	33

Of these 33 memorials, 10 are for thorough drainage under summary proceedings, applying for the drainage and improvement of about 30,000 acres.

With reference to the memorials for river drainage, we have been obliged to inform the parties presenting them, that as the Act for summary proceedings will expire on the 1st day of August next, we could not engage to have the preliminaries completed in time to commence work this season.

Of the cases under examination, and of those for which reports are completed and before us, but a small number can be advanced before August next, as the consideration required before our approval can be given (many of them being very important measures), after which the assents of the proprietors and leasehold tenants have to be obtained.

WORKS.

Abstract of Works and Expenditure for the last five Months.

		£.	s.	d.	Men per Day.
January, 68 districts, expenditure	.	18,000	0	0	5,540
February, 77 "	"	14,869	0	0	4,252
March, 97 "	"	15,615	0	0	5,839
April, 112 "	"	22,650	13	1	8,628
May, 98 "	"	28,649	0	0	.

The foregoing abstract requires some explanation.

The number of districts in progress for April given as 112, while the number for May as 98, might indicate a falling off as compared with this previous month. This may be accounted for by our having transferred the cases of thorough drainage to the Act 10 Vic., c. 32, by which the cases under the Drainage Acts are now confined to river or arterial drainage.

Up to the passing of this Act (June 3, 1847), final notices had been issued in 54 cases out of 153 (the total number issued up to the end of May), leaving the number of fixed river drainage districts up to that time as 99, being one number more than that (98) in which instructions had been given to commence the works, and for which arrangements were in progress.

This district is the Main, in the county Antrim. The works are postponed pending some legal difficulties in connexion with the millers interested in the district.

We issued orders to our engineers not to employ any more labourers, nor to commence any new districts or portions of districts for which they had previously been instructed, until the result of our advertisements for money at 5 per cent. can be ascertained. In consequence of this order, many of the districts in which works were ordered to be commenced have not been proceeded with, and many portions of the larger districts have been delayed at the time when the works could have been most economically executed. We apprehend some continuance of this delay, as no offers have yet been made.

Several new districts in which all the preliminaries have been complied with except issuing the "final notice," are also delayed for the same reasons.

Shannon Navigation.

All the works along the Shannon have met with great interruption by the floods which set in shortly after our last monthly report.

At some of the most important works the dams gave way, which totally stopped the operations, throwing out of employment a large number of men, and interrupting the progress at a very unfavourable period of the season. The floods, however, are now subsiding, and already there are men employed making up the breaches, and making preparations for resuming the works, so that we expect in a few days the various works along the river will be in active operation.

The steam dredges are still deepening the shoals at Garrymore and Athlone. At the former important shoal there remains but a few days work to complete, and at the latter the strata is still found very favourable.

The average number of persons employed daily at the Shannon Works during the month of May was 1822, giving a total for the month of 26,442.

Piers and Harbours.

The operations at the under-mentioned places have been carried on satisfactorily during the past month, viz.—

Annalong,	Clogherhead,	Mountcharles,
Ballycotton,	Grey Stones,	Slade,
Ballyness,	Portnablahey,	Rathmullin,
Bunowen,	Rush,	Ballyvaughan.
Carlingford,		

The daily average number of persons employed during the month was 728, giving a total of 14,568.

Fish Curing Stations.

The buildings at the fishery stations at Valentia and Castletown-berehaven are progressing satisfactorily, and both nearly ready to admit of curing being carried on in them.

At Killybegs and Belmullet we continue to have satisfactory accounts, although, owing to the continued tempestuous weather during the greater part of the month of May, the supply has not been great.

At Roundstone the state of things continues unsatisfactory; every exertion hitherto made to induce the fishermen to exercise their calling having failed, we have given notice, through our Inspector, that if the supply be not soon provided, so as to allow of the Board's purchasing for curing, they will break up the establishment at that place.

At Belmullet some small progress has been made, but the demand for fresh fish continues, so that the price authorised to be given by the Board's agents has not admitted of their purchasing.

This is so far satisfactory, as proving that there is a good market for all fish at present taken; to secure which was the great object of the Board's recommending the establishment of curing stations.

PUBLIC WORKS—IRELAND.

REPORT of the BOARD of PUBLIC WORKS in IRELAND relating to
MEASURES adopted for the RELIEF of DISTRESS in JUNE, 1847.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

COMMISSIONERS of PUBLIC WORKS to the LORDS of the TREASURY.

*Office of Public Works, Dublin,
July 19, 1847.*

WE have now to record a total cessation of *relief employment* as connected with the public roads, the few works at present in operation being confined to those which are absolutely necessary to render the post roads and other principal thoroughfares of the country safe for the traffic during the next winter.

The numbers employed are as follows:—

Periods.	Number.		Cost.			
	Roads.	Drainage.	Labour.	Superintendence, charged to Revenue.	Superintendence, charged to Government.	Total.
<i>Week ending—</i>	<i>Labourers.</i>	<i>Labourers.</i>	<i>£.</i>	<i>£.</i>	<i>£.</i>	<i>£.</i>
June 5, 1847 . . .	80,409	21,077	41,488	4,287	3,630	49,370
June 12, 1847 . . .	59,978	19,707	32,516	4,257	3,630	40,268
June 19, 1847 . . .	22,607	19,760	21,775	3,500	3,569	28,835
June 26, 1847 . . .	7,926	20,160	17,391	2,354	3,312	23,257
July 3, 1847 . . .	1,825	20,208	19,638	2,381	3,114	19,127

The funds at our disposal will not enable us to perfect the several alterations and improvements which have been commenced on the post and other important roads, but we hope to be enabled to effect as much as will prevent accidents.

The Drainage Works, under Mr. Labouchere's Letter, have been continued as usual, the number of men employed on them varying from 19,000 to 21,000. These works were distinguished from the roads, and were continued partly on account of their strictly reproductive character, and partly to preserve faith with the landed proprietors, who had undertaken to repay the amount expended, and had made farming arrangements consequent on their completion.

And we have the pleasure to record the universal expression of satisfaction we have received in regard to the manner in which the Drainage Works have been executed under the superintendence of our inspectors; and in several instances applications have been made by proprietors, seeking loans under the Land Improvement Act, to continue the execution of the works under the superintendence of inspectors named by this Board; such inspectors to be paid by the applicants.

Of course, under the terms of the Act, such applications cannot be complied with, but it is gratifying to find that works commenced without much previous arrangement, and conducted for the most part by gentlemen who, though they had devoted much time to the study and practice of draining, were not civil engineers, have succeeded so well, and that the works had been carried out with so much system and success.

The greater portion of these Drainage Works will be closed by the end of this month, and the whole will be discontinued by the 15th of next month, at which time we propose to transmit a general statement, arranged in counties, showing the position and extent of each of the Drainage Works that has been executed under Mr. Labouchere's Letter.

IMPROVEMENT OF LANDED PROPERTY ACT.

No works have, as yet, been actually commenced under this Act, but numerous applications have been received and favourably reported on by our inspectors, which amount in the whole to 419,034*l.* 5*s.*, and many others which have been received are now under investigation, and will be reported on during the present month.

Much anxiety is evinced by the landed proprietors for the commencement of the works for the purpose of affording immediate employment so as to avoid additional rating under the new Relief Act, and we expect to be enabled to comply with their wishes, without much delay, as schedules are now in preparation for insertion in the "Dublin Gazette," being the preliminary to the sanction of the Treasury.

Much delay has occurred owing to the inaccurate manner in which many of the landed proprietors have made the statement of the title under which they make application for a loan, and in consequence the memorials have necessarily been returned for amendment; but we hope such irregularities, which must be expected in the commencement, will soon cease, and that in future we shall be enabled to proceed without much interruption.

RIVER DRAINAGE.

Acts 5 and 6 Vic., c. 89; 8 and 9 Vic., c. 69; and 9 Vic. c. 4.

Preliminaries.

Memorials received up to 30th June	643
Ditto received up to 31st May	629
Number received during the month of June	14

All applications for thorough drainage or improvement of the lands of one proprietor under summary proceedings have been transferred to the Act 10 Vic., c. 32, "An Act to facilitate the Improvement of Landed Property in Ireland." We class them under five heads, viz. :—

	£.	s.	d.
No. 1.—Fifty-three cases in which final notices had been issued and loans sanctioned by your Lordships, the total estimates for which amount to	289,265	0	0
The amount sanctioned on account	48,823	17	11
The amount issued	15,134	6	8
No. 2.—Nineteen cases in which examinations were completed, the further steps taken, but parties had not assented within the time prescribed by the Summary Proceedings' Act. Total estimates	87,859	0	0
No. 3.—Thirty-eight cases in which examinations were complete, the return seemed sufficient, but were postponed for new law. Total estimates amount to	69,570	0	0
No. 4.—Twenty-seven cases in which examinations were complete, but no further steps taken, as return on proposed outlay did not appear sufficient. Total estimates amount to	92,485	0	0
No. 5.—Nineteen cases in which no steps were taken, as requisite information was not furnished by application. No estimate prepared			
	£539,182	0	0

There appears a falling off in the number of memorials for river drainage as compared with the last month of nine cases, which we account for by our having informed parties applying that the preliminaries could not be finished before the expiration of the Summary Act on the 1st of August next, and also by the want of funds for carrying on works, even if the preliminaries had been completed.

Since the Continuous Summary Proceedings' Bill has been brought before Parliament, we have instructed engineers to examine and report upon the applications received, so that no unnecessary delay may occur.

WORKS.

Since our last monthly report, no final notices have been issued, owing to the want of funds, and we have been obliged to suspend new works which had been ordered but not commenced. Although we advertised for loans of money, no offers have been received.

ABSTRACT of WORKS and EXPENDITURE for last Six Months.

January, 68	Districts.	Expenditure, £18,000.	Men per day, 5,540
February, 77	"	" 14,869.	" 4,252
March, 97	"	" 15,615.	" 5,839
April, 112	"	" 22,650.	" 8,628
May, 98	"	" 28,649.	" 10,863
June, 98	"	" 34,952.	" 17,038

HARRY D. JONES.
 RICHARD GRIFFITH.
 JOHN RADCLIFF.
 W^m. THOMAS MULVANY.
 T. A. LARCOM.